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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP
INTELLIGENCE REPORT

16095

COUNTRY Levant/U.S.S.R.

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SUBJECT Communist Activities

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SUPPLEMENT

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1. It has been reported that Vidaranko, representative of the Russian Consulate General in Damascus, together with a man named Gabreil went to Tripoli, Lebanon, on 14 March, in order to secure complete information relating to the incidents which occurred there during Fawzi Qawuqji's 4 March visit. Vidaranko conferred for two hours with Dr. Sami Alam al-Din, Chief of the Communist Party in Tripoli and President of the Society of Friends of the Soviet Union.

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2. Moses Khalajian, a member of Artin Maduian's group of Communists in Iraq, came to Beirut on 16 March as the guest of Ohannes Aghabashian, Lebanese Armenian Communist. A meeting was held in Aghabashian's house, attended by Agob Zeitounian and Ohannes Ishakian, Lebanese Armenian Communists, and Yabram Ellezian, President of the Society of Friends of Soviet Armenia. During the meeting Khalajian read them correspondence from Baghdad Communist headquarters. Khalajian is believed to be the intermediary for all secret correspondence and contact between Communists in Iraq and in the Levant.

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3. It is reliably reported that during its visit to the U.S.S.R., the Lebanese Cultural Mission had frequent contact with the Soviet Academy of Eastern Studies.

The chief of the Middle Eastern Section of the Academy appeared to be mainly interested in information on the following subjects:

- a. Non-Christian minorities in the Levant (Druzes, Kurds, Circassians, and Shi'as).
- b. He also asked about the trade union movement. Antun Tabit, head of the Lebanese Mission, is said to have stated that, from 1943 to the present, trade unions in Lebanon were subjected to an "aggressive attitude" on the part of the government.
- c. The Mission was asked to furnish detailed reports on (1) the strength of the Syrian Popular Party in Lebanon, and (2) the possibility of augmenting social and cultural ties between the Arab countries and the Soviet Republics of Central Asia.

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4. On its return to Beirut from the U.S.S.R. on 20 March, the Lebanese Cultural Mission was welcomed by Najat Kassab, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Syrian Communist Party, and Kamal Banna and Antun Makdisi, both Syrian

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Communists. The members of the Mission lunched with the Syrian delegation and with Soviet Minister Daniel Solod on 21 March, after which they accompanied the Syrians back to Damascus.

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5. It is reported that the Soviet Legation in Damascus has been interesting itself in the Trans-Jordanian Reform Movement which has its headquarters in Damascus. The Syrian Communist Party has been instructed to establish contact with these Trans-Jordanians and has already reported progress. Daniel Solod has promised financial help to those Trans-Jordanians in Damascus who agree to work for "the complete liberation of Trans-Jordan." Trans-Jordanians have not yet been notified of this offer. They have, however, accepted another Soviet offer, which was to print handbills to be smuggled into Trans-Jordan. Two such handbills were supposedly smuggled into the country in early April by camel drivers.

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Comment: It seems highly possible that the Trans-Jordanian Reform Movement referred to above is the same as the Trans-Jordan Republic Movement mentioned in a report earlier this year. The latter organization also has its headquarters in Damascus and was planning to request Soviet intervention in Trans-Jordanian affairs. Its Directing Committee is reportedly composed of Dr. Subhi Abu Ghanimah, Chairman; Nabih Rashidat, Secretary; Muhammad Anim; and Salim Afua.

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